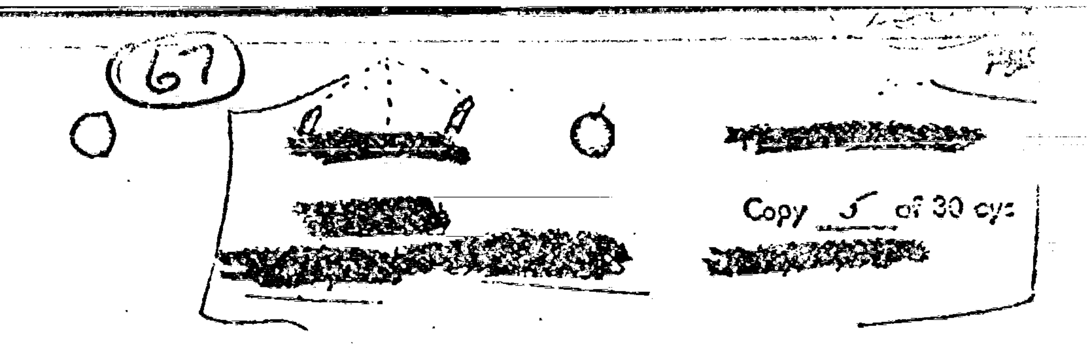


21 September 1957

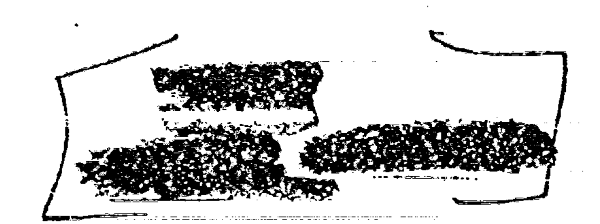
MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director, Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Unidentified Flying Object Reported on 20 September 1957

1. As reported by components of the US Air Defense Command, an unidentified flying object (UFO) was tracked by US radars on a relatively straight course from the eastern tip of Long Island to the vicinity of Buffalo. The object was reportedly moving westward at an altitude of 50,000 feet and speed of 2,000 kts. "Jamming" was reported by several radars in this vicinity and westward as far as Chicago. In a subsequent briefing for representatives of the IAC, the US Air Force reported that the original reports had been degraded somewhat by information that: (a) there was an 11 minute break in the track; (b) weather conditions in the area were of the type which have in the past produced false radar pips and electronic interference; (c) B-47's of SAC were in the area near Chicago on an ECM training flight. The ADC has not completed its investigation of this incident, but in any event it now seems clear that the phenomena reported west of Buffalo were not related to the UFO.

2. We have no intelligence on Soviet activities (e.g., long-range air, submarine, or merchant shipping operations) which can be related specifically to this reported event. We believe it unlikely that a Soviet aircraft could conduct a mission at this speed and altitude and return to Bloc territory. However, we credit the USSR with the capability to have a submarine-launched cruise-type missile of low supersonic ~~subsonic~~ performance and a range of about 500 n.m., but we have no specific evidence of the existence of such a missile.

3. We have examined possible Soviet motives for launching a one-way vehicle on an operation over the US, and consider that there would be little motivation at this time, except possibly a psychological or retaliatory motive, which we believe is marginal. One-way reconnaissance operations are largely ruled out by the likelihood that the results would be of small value, and the risk of compromise would be very great.



21 September 1957

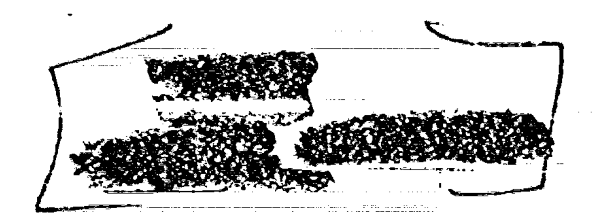
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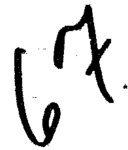
SUBJECT : Unidentified Flying Object Reported on 20 September 1957

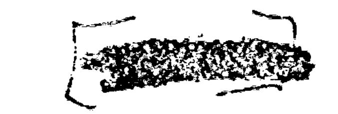
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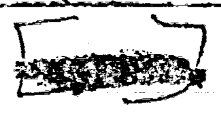
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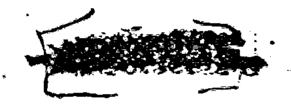
4. We conclude, therefore, that it is highly improbable that a Soviet operation is responsible for the UFO reports of 20 September.

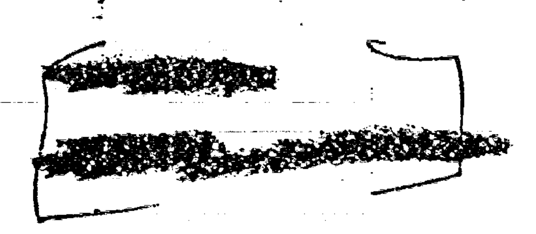
5. Considering the facts that the ADC investigation is incomplete, and that weather phenomena are increasingly likely explanations of the original reports, we recommend that no IAC meeting be called on this subject at this time.

HERBERT SCOVILLE, Jr.

Copies to IAC Agencies as follows:

AEC	1
ONI	3
FBI	1
JIG	2
ARMY	3
AIR FORCE	3
STATE	3
CIA	5


[redacted]


[redacted]